

Director's Remarks, May 2011

Performance

Eastgate and Ooltewah/Collegedale libraries saw an increase in circulation again this past month. Downtown Library circulation continues to fall. Even with the addition of on-line renewals, the Downtown Library is still lagging behind last year's statistics. The severe weather at the end of April was one of the contributing factors.

Automation

The KACE systems management product from Dell has been ordered. Once it is installed it should relieve some of the workload from our 2 full-time and 1 part-time automation staff. They will be able to update each computer remotely from the automation room.

The 40 laptops from the Stimulus Grant have been ordered through the Tennessee State Library as well as additional desktop computers with the Windows 7 operating system from Dell. I now have quotes for new printers, touchscreens and coin/bill acceptors. Our current printers are 14 years old and can no longer keep up with the speed needed to print numerous PDF documents. The touchscreens will be attached to our Envisionware computer reservation stations. With the addition of touchscreens and coin boxes, the library will progress to a level of self-service efficiency that many library patrons now enjoy elsewhere.

I am requesting Board approval to purchase items using Free Public Library Funds. The individual items are not over the \$10,000 limit but the City cut-off date for submitting requisitions is close and I do not want to hold-up ordering if the City asks for a formal Board vote.

12 Color Laser Printers = \$6,938.28. This will give library patrons the option of printing to color for an increased cost per copy.

5 LED Touchscreen Monitors = \$2,040. Patrons will be able to use these screens to reserve computers and pay for printing.

4 Coin/Bill Acceptors = \$9,980. This will allow patrons to pay for printing at the touchscreen release stations without staff having to take payment and release the print jobs.

93 Microsoft Office software licenses = \$4,836. I was able to get the educational rate for software for all of the new computers. There is a possibility that Stimulus Grant funds can be used.

40 Microsoft Office software licenses = \$2,080. These would be for the 40 laptops and would actually be paid out of the Stimulus Grant funds.

Downtown Renovation and Repairs

Work has begun on the upgrade of the new digital elevator system. Chattanooga Elevator was able to start work on the 4th floor elevator several days ahead of schedule. The left-hand elevator should be ready for inspection by next week and will then be approved for operation. At that point, the right-hand elevator will be shut down for its upgrade.

Renewal of Online Databases

Some of the funds for the online databases will come from state funds received for library materials. Databases are now considered essential “materials” along with books and audio-visuals.

I was able to negotiate with EBSCO to continue our present subscriptions at a reduced cost from their initial quote. However, we will no longer have the Discovery search. We received it free for one year because the library was a trial beta site. The regular cost is \$51,500. Even with our discount, I believe that the cost for the Discovery search is excessive. We compromised by selecting another search tool, OPAC, which will perform the same basic functions as the Discovery product.

I am requesting Board approval to renew the following databases:

EBSCO - Which includes 10 databases plus the OPAC search (which will also search the Tennessee Electronic Library databases). Renewal cost \$96,500.

ReferenceUSA – This database has had increased usage since our library presentations to the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce. Renewal cost \$11,919.

Budget & Staffing

Eileen Johnson and I met with Daisy Madison for a Capital Budget hearing on Monday, May 2, 2011. Also present from the Budget Office were Dan Johnson, Randy Ray and Fredia Kitchen. We asked for \$26,000 to replace our 16 year-old delivery van and \$1,000,000 for preliminary work at the proposed new Eastgate Library building. This City-owned building needs to be gutted and the electrical wiring and plumbing reworked. It will need to be wired for fiber optic cabling for the computer network. The building also needs roof work and an updated air conditioning system.

During the Capital Budget hearing, we discussed the Ooltewah/Collegedale Library and what might happen to it at the end of the fiscal year. With the expiration of the Sales Tax Agreement, the City will take over the running and funding of the library system. However, this will not include the Ooltewah/Collegedale branch since it is not within the City limits. The consensus was that the Ooltewah/Collegedale Library might be closed as of July 1, 2011 and that we should have new service policies ready at that time.

At the same meeting, I spoke with Daisy Madison about the staff who work at the Ooltewah/Collegedale Library. We have many vacant positions throughout the library system that have not been filled because of cutbacks in funding over the last few years. Transferring the staff at Ooltewah/Collegedale would remove some of the work burden at other libraries. However, salaries for these vacant positions are not in our current budget.

On an unrelated note, I wanted to let Board members that are not already aware know that my husband, Bill Johnston, works part-time in the Maintenance Department. He is a retired engineer from the ConocoPhillips Company and is the one who has delivered the books to the branches for the past six years. He was hired by the previous director and has never been under my direct supervision.

Policy Changes

I have been asked by the City to create new policies to distinguish between services provided to the residents of the City of Chattanooga and services provided to residents of Hamilton County that do not live within the city limits. I need input from the Library Board on a process to handle these policy changes and how you would like for me to proceed.

Submitted by Eva M. Johnston, Interim Director